

Sunday Magazine

War Department Washington, April 20, 1865,

\$100,000 REWARD

THE MURDERER

Of our late beloved President, Abraham Lincoln,
IS STILL AT LARGE.

\$50,000 REWARD

Will be paid by this Department for his apprehension, in addition to any reward offered by Municipal Authorities or State Executives.

\$25,000 REWARD

Will be paid for the apprehension of JOHN H. Surratt, one of Booth's Accomplices.

\$25,000 REWARD

Will be paid for the apprehension of David C. Harold, another of Booth's accomplices.

LIBERAL REWARDS will be paid for any information that shall conduce to the arrest of either of the above-named criminals, or their accomplices.

All persons harboring or secreting the said persons, or either of them, or aiding or assisting their concealment or escape, will be treated as accomplices in the murder of the President and the attempted assassination of the Secretary of State, and shall be subject to trial before a Military Commission and the punishment of DEATH.

Let the stain of innocent blood be removed from the land by the arrest and punishment of the murderers.

All good citizens are exhorted to aid public justice on this occasion. Every man should consider his own conscience charged with this solemn duty, and rest neither night nor day until it be accomplished.

EDWIN M. S. ANTON, Secretary of War.

DESCRIPTIONS.—**BOOTH** is five feet 7, or 8 inches high, slender build, high forehead, black hair, dark eyes, and wears a heavy black moustache.

JOHN H. Surratt is about 5 feet, 9 inches. Hair is thin and dark; eyes rather light; no beard. Would weigh 145 or 150 pounds. Complexion rather pale and clear, with color in his cheeks. Wore light clothes of fine quality. Shoulders square; cheek bones rather prominent; chin narrow; ears projecting at the top; forehead rather low and square, but broad. Parted his hair on the right side; neck rather long. His lips are firmly set. A slim man.

HAROLD is a little chunky man, quite a youth, and wears a very thin moustache.

A Memorial of Our Greatest National Tragedy

THIS is a reproduction of the poster, in those days called a "broadside," which was issued by the War Department offering a reward of \$100,000 for the apprehension of John Wilkes Booth and his accomplices in the assassination of President Lincoln, John H. Surratt and David C. Harold.

The fiftieth anniversary of this crime, the greatest single tragedy in the history of the American people, occurs next Wednesday, and is observed by means of a memorable article on pages 4 and 5 of this issue.

50th Anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's Death

Events which prompted John Wilkes Booth to plot to kidnap the President and, when that plan failed, to kill him—The assassination, flight of Booth, capture and execution of his accomplices

them at some obscure street corner. But there was nothing in this to appeal to the theatricality of Booth's nature. He wanted the thing done with all the accessories. It must be in a public place, in the presence of hundreds of witnesses. What was mere practicability to the sensation of performing an epochal event with the multitude looking on? He swore at his advisers—even threatened to shoot one of them—and finally had his way.

A night in February was selected. On the evening of Wednesday, the eighteenth, it was rumored that the President, Secretary of State and Gen. Grant would attend a performance of "Jack Cade" at Ford's Theater. Booth assembled his forces, aggregating about 50 men. Everything was in readiness, even to post horses and ferry arrangements. But the night proved to be a stormy one. The President did not attend the theater. Grant departed from Washington soon afterwards. The conspirators scattered. Before the broken threads could be knitted together again, Appomattox had made the attempt worthless.

Only a few of his henchmen, and they for the most part unreliable and irresponsible men, remained faithful to their leader. The saner-minded of them had come to the conclusion that the war was over and nothing was to be done about it. Not so Booth. His overpowering lust for notoriety had not been satisfied. He had dreamed of being the hero of the war and the war was over with him as unnoted as before.

It is probable that his first temptation to play the assassin's role—to him it was the role of a Brutus—came at Lincoln's second inauguration. In the midst of the President's inaugural address, he became infuriated at some remark and turned to his most ardent proselyte, a youth named Payne, with the request that Payne shoot Lincoln then and there. The latter protested that the risk was too great and the two went away, to talk over their fancied grievances in private. From that moment the obsession that he was a Brutus, destined for the high service of ridding his country of a tyrant, grew upon the actor. It was not enough for him that he must remove the President. The Vice-President and the Secretary of State all must be destroyed at one moment, leaving the Government helpless and without competent leadership. He won over to his view a youth named Herold, Payne and a foreigner named Atzerodt, a man of powerful physique and great bravado who, the sequel showed, was at heart a coward.

On the morning of April 14 Booth learned that a messenger from the White House had engaged a box for the President at Ford's Theater for that evening's performance of "Our American Cousin," in which Laura Keane was starring, assisted by Joseph Jefferson and the elder Sothern. Immediately he decided that the hour had struck. Previously he had examined the private box, usually reserved for the President, and made sure of the entrance and the exits from the stage.

To Herold and Payne were assigned the task of slaying Secretary of State Seward and to Atzerodt the murder of Vice-President Johnson. Booth reserved for himself the major role, that of killing Abraham Lincoln within full view of a multitude.

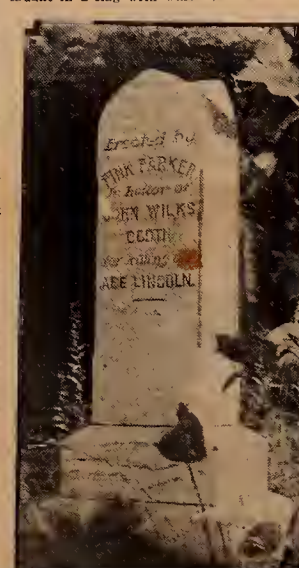
He went about his arrangements calmly. First he wrote a letter to a Washington newspaper, outlining his reasons for the crime, and gave it to a friend, with instructions that it was to be delivered in the morning. He stationed a horse, saddled and bridled, at the stage exit, in charge of a boy. At 10 o'clock he went into the theater and, as he was well known, had no difficulty in getting into the box adjoining that of the President. Once inside, he barricaded the door and stood for a minute, looking at the audience.

Lincoln was seated in one corner of his box, with Mrs. Lincoln at his side and Maj. Rathbone and Miss Harris, stepson and daughter of Senator Ira Harris of New York, sharing the compartment. The President was absorbed in the progress of the drama where Harry Hawk, an actor, was speaking his part alone on the stage. Laura Keane was waiting her cue to come on. Jefferson, Sothern and the other actors were hack of the scene.

Booth pulled a derring out of his pocket. "Slingshot!" he shouted and pulled the trigger. Lincoln fell forward, mortally wounded and unconscious. The actor leaped to the stage, 12 feet below, as a thin circle of smoke writhed out of the box. His spur caught in a flag with which the box was draped, and he fell heavily, breaking a bone in his left leg. "Slingshot tyrant!" (So always to tyrants!) he shouted again, as he fell heavily. Before a hand could be reached to restrain him, he dashed across the stage, through the passageway, knocked down the boy holding his horse, leaped upon the animal and raced away, while cries of "Hang him! Shoot him! Burn the theater!" reverberated behind him.

Lincoln never regained consciousness, and died the next morning.

In the meantime, Herold and Payne had gone to the house where Secretary Seward was in bed with a broken arm and broken jaw as the results of a fall from his horse. Herold waited outside while Payne went in with the pretense that he was a messenger sent for some money. Pushing by servants, he made his way to Seward's chamber, where he was stopped by the Secretary's eldest son. He knocked the young man down with his revolver, when it failed to fire, and struck down a soldier nurse with his knife. He stabbed Seward three times about the face and neck until the nurse seized him behind and the wounded man rolled off the opposite side of the bed. After a fierce struggle, he broke away from the nurse and Seward's younger son, ran out of the house, narrowly escaping a file of soldiers, jumped upon a waiting horse and rode away.



Monument erected to Lincoln's assassin by an unreconciled Southerner.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

—From a drawing by P. Walter Taylor.

WHEN the clock hands point to 20 minutes after 10, next Wednesday night, they will mark the semi-centennial of the assassination of the greatest American historical figure since Washington—Abraham Lincoln. Relatively few Post-Dispatch readers can recall the dramatic incidents of that hour when, for the first time, a President of the United States paid tribute to the murderous madness which had laid many a foreign potentate low. For the information of those whose knowledge of the tragedy is scant, the story is here recapitulated by way of marking the fiftieth anniversary.

When the Emancipator was shot as he sat in a box at Ford's Theater, and for a long time afterwards, the belief spread through the North that it was a political crime hatched by supporters of the newly shattered Confederacy. Lincoln's name at that time undoubtedly was execrated throughout the South. Yet history has conclusively proved that the murder was not the result of a political conspiracy, but of a plot hatched in the half-crazed mind of its principal person, the actor John Wilkes Booth. And although there is standing today in an Alabama town a monument to the slayer, hosts of representative Southern men today believe and preach that Lincoln was the sincerest friend the South had in the North when the Civil War was over.

John Wilkes Booth was the youngest son of Junius Brutus Booth, the illustrious stage contemporary of Barrett and Kean, whose declining days were overcast with the shadows of insanity. The youth followed the family traditions and, although at the time of the tragedy he was not more than 25 years old, had no small fame as an actor. When the war came, he became a very violent Southern sympathizer, although he did not forsake his career to enlist as a soldier.

When, after two years of triumph on the battlefield, the fortunes of the Confederacy began to wane, Booth gave way to bitter, regretful moods. His discontent reached its climax when Gen. Grant, pursuing his new policy of "attrition," announced that there would be no further exchanges of prisoners. "If we liberate all prisoners," he declared, "we'll have to fight until the South is exterminated." The Confederacy needed soldiers and more than 23,000 of its men were languishing in Northern prisons. The North could spare its boys at Libby, Andersonville and Belle Isle, but the South could not spare its 23,000 missing.

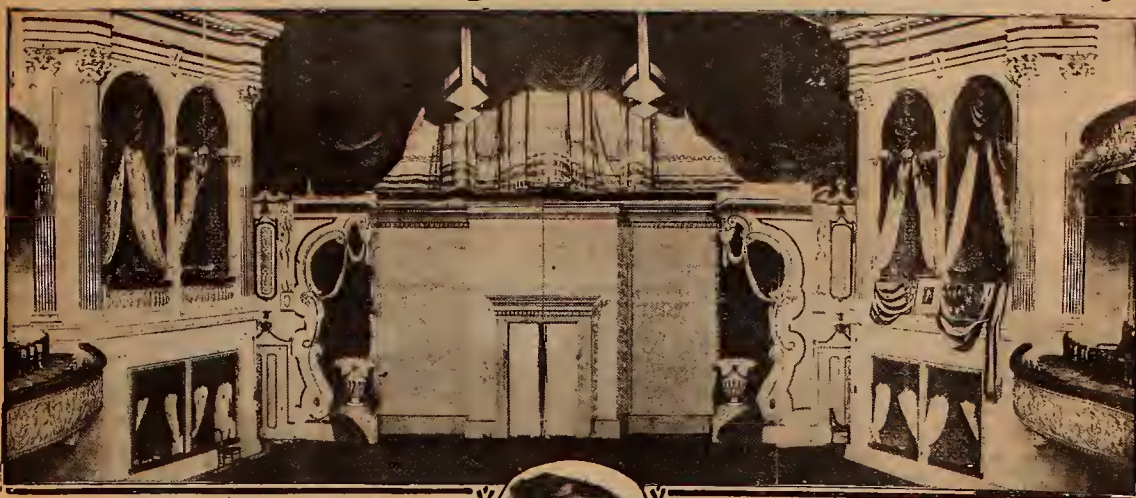
Booth had long wished to do something stately, heroic, desperate, to aid his favored party. He brooded long over the matter until finally he got the inspiration that if he could deliver the President of the United States, the Secretary of War and the Commander in Chief of the Union armies into the hands of the Confederates, he would not only win deathless fame, but he would also make it possible to ransom every Southern soldier in a Federal prison. Accordingly he began laying the ground work of a plot to kidnap them.

He visited a Confederate Junta in Canada and submitted his project. He was told that it was wild and impracticable and that the Confederate Government could have nothing to do with it, although he was assured that, if he could carry it out, the prisoners would be gratefully received. After turning all his available money into English bank exchange, he went to Washington, stopping at New York on the way to keep a stage engagement with his brother, Edwin.

The re-election of Lincoln to the presidency fanned Booth's resentment. Although in outline the proposed kidnaping was one of the craziest schemes it is possible to imagine, he went about his plans with the most meticulous care. Gradually he grouped about him men fitted to his purpose and ready to take part in it. He studied the routes of flight, planted relay stations of horses and even bought horses for himself and his leading associates.

As the time drew near for the execution of the project, Booth's arch-conspirators opposed his plans for a public attack. He wished the climax to take place at a theater when half Washington was there, but they tried to insist that it would be better to wait until the intended victims were in a carriage together and to assault

Greatest Tragedy of Nation's Most Tragic Days



Photograph of the stage and boxes in Ford's Theater. The box occupied by the President is that of the portrait is that of

That Johnson escaped assassination was due to the cowardice of Atzerodt. This worthy went to the hotel where the Vice-President was staying, but his heart failed him. Instead of filling his part of the agreement, he drank in the hotel bar until he became intoxicated and then went away. In the meantime friends who had witnessed the assassination of Lincoln arrived at Johnson's house and, soon after, a squad of soldiers surrounded the hotel.

The hours that followed saw not only the city of Washington but the whole country in a state of panic. Secretary of War Stanton, perhaps the least qualified man to handle such a situation, took complete charge and a regime of martial law was inaugurated. The wildest turmoil ensued. Rumors of a widespread Confederate plot of assassination and terrorism were everywhere believed. Guards were placed around the residences of all important Government officials and the city was declared in a state of siege. By Stanton's order Ford's Theater was destroyed. City police, constabulary and officers of the army were requisitioned. When the assassins were arrested, the President's murderer

The real identity of the assassins was established through the livermen from whom they had rented their horses. It was not, however, until Lafayette C. Baker, chief of the National Detective Police, took charge that real progress was made towards finding Booth. Atzerodt's trail was not difficult and Payne was arrested when he appeared, disguised as a laborer, at the home of a friend in Washington.

Booth's escape probably would have been certain, because of the time he had, if it had not been for the broken leg. He lost his way en route to the Potomac and had to be guided out of some marshes by a negro who remembered him afterwards because of his injury. Then he had to visit a doctor who treated the fracture, upon Booth's explanation that he had fallen from his horse. Herold, who had fled at the turmoil when Seward was attacked, had joined him and was his companion on his journeys.

The two of them wandered along the Potomac, crossing first to the Maryland and then to the Virginia side, until they encountered three ex-Confederate soldiers, Jett, Ruggles and Bainbridge, with whom they remained several days, seeking shelter in isolated farm houses and in forests. Once they hid in a copse and watched a patrol of cavalrymen, hot on their trail, ride by them. Whenever he was able, Booth made entries in his diary about his memorable flight. The diary came to light afterwards in the impeachment proceedings against President Johnson. They obtained food here and there upon Booth's plea that he was a wounded Confederate soldier, going home from the war.

Booth and Herold were run to earth in a tobacco barn on a plantation owned by a man named Garrett, where they had taken refuge April 24. Jett had been captured by cavalrymen and, at the point of a pistol, was forced to reveal the hiding place. Garrett refused to tell where the men were hid, but a son confessed when the troopers had put a noose about the father's neck and threatened to hang him. The soldiers formed a circle about the warehouse.

The building was about 50 feet square and contained little beside some forage, including a quantity of hay and straw. Lieut. Baker called upon the men to surrender. Booth yielded with him to "give a lame man a chance," and offered to fight the whole command. The officer refused with the statement that, if he did not surrender, he would set the barn afire. Herold surrendered, but Booth refused to come out, so the barn was set afire. The following graphic description of what ensued is from "The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln," by David Miller Dewitt (Macmillan):

"As the flames lit up the lofty interior, Baker caught sight of the trapped tragedian, just as he was about to make his final exit. Just risen from his bed of straw, with a crutch under his left arm and the carbine in his left hand, Booth was in the act of starting towards the fire, peering through the interspaces to



Washington, as it was at the time of the assassination, first one draped with flags on the right. George Washington.

catch sight of the invisible foe. He caught up an old table as if to throw it upon the blaze, but dropped it and, looking up, saw the flames mounting to the roof.

"Then he seemed to give it up and his countenance fell. Dropping his crutch and passing the carbine to his left hand, he drew his revolver and, 'with a kind of limping, halting jump,' advanced within 12 feet of the door where Baker, unseen by him, was awaiting his approach; and there stood for one brief moment—encompassed by armed men, to every one of whom in the light of the fire, he was an easy mark—weighing the supreme alternative before him; should he 'live to be the show and gaze of the time,' 'be hailed with the rabble's curse,' or should he die by his own hand?"

"A pistol shot breaks the smoky air. The actor, with an upward spring, falls upon his back. Baker is upon him in an instant, twists out of his clenched hand the revolver, the carbine having fallen between his legs."

Booth at whose home Payne was arrested, were hanged for their share in the conspiracy, by sentence of a military tribunal. The sentence of this woman and its execution gave rise to a grave national scandal, in which it was openly charged that the tribunal was biased and condemned her to death on evidence that would not have convicted anybody in a civil court. Dr. Mudd, who set Booth's leg, and three men, Arnold, O'Loughlin and Spangler, charged with complicity in the kidnapping plot, also were convicted and sentenced to imprisonment; Spangler for six years and the others for life. Afterwards they were pardoned. The trial undoubtedly was a summary one, to which the general public was not admitted.

John H. Surratt, who was named in the Secretary of War's broadside offering a \$100,000 reward, escaped to Canada. Afterwards he was arrested and tried, but the jury disagreed.

The curious monument erected in Booth's memory was put up by the direction of a man named Pink Parker at Alabama, who provided in his will that if it should be destroyed it should be replaced by a larger one and that a still larger should replace any of its successors that may be razed. It describes Booth as the man who killed "Old Abe Lincoln."

The belief that Jefferson Davis and his supporters were involved in the conspiracy was, at first, widespread throughout the North. Indeed, the military tribunal announced that it believed Davis was the prime instigator of the assassination. He was heavily ironed and confined in Fort Monroe.

The Bureau of Military Justice started out with spirit to prosecute the ex-Confederates. Witnesses habited of documentary evidence, but the Bureau realized that in a trial of the importance of that intended, the prosecution would have to present conclusive proof. A Canadian offered to sell eight "incriminating" letters for \$20,000, but a messenger sent to open negotiations returned with the report that the letters were fabulous. As a matter of fact, the belief in Davis' guilt gradually diminished and the whole thing finally petered out.

President Johnson was among the first to become lukewarm in the effort to fasten the crime upon the leaders of the Confederacy. This was urged against him afterwards in the impeachment proceedings when, for the first time, Booth's diary saw the light of day. Some of Johnson's enemies even believed in fabricated evidence that he had corresponded with Booth before the assassination. The President was sincerely referred to in the halls of Congress as "the man who came into the presidency through the door of assassination." It was even said that Booth, in his flight, had boasted that he had made Andy Johnson President and that Johnson would hang high as Haman if he went back on him. The diary proved worthless as evidence, although an attempt was made to show that it had been mutilated.



The orch-conspirator, John Wilkes Booth, of top; below, David C. Herold, Lewis Payne and George A. Atzerodt, who, with Mrs. Mary E. Surratt (below) were hanged for their part in the plot to kill Lincoln.



Execution of the conspirators.



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